



CLAS/SICK HIP HOP



AMY O'NEAL
OPPOSING FORCES

FEB 16-18 2017
YBCA FORUM

YBCA.ORG
#CLASSICKHIPHOP

**YERBA BUENA
CENTER FOR
THE ARTS**

WELCOME TO YERBA BUENA CENTER FOR THE ARTS



Our organization was founded in 1993 as a citizen institution that would be home to the diverse local arts community while serving to connect the Bay Area to the world. YBCA's mission is to generate culture that moves people. We believe that culture—a collection of art, traditions, values, human experiences, and stories—is what enables us to act with imagination and creativity, to act socially, politically, and with conviction. Culture instigates change in the world.

We believe that more and different kinds of people need to be defining culture today and that more people need to have access to cultural experiences that are relevant to their lives and their communities. We need new definitions and new experiences that bring people together regardless of their differences in order to make the inclusive and equitable culture we need today. We believe that the arts should be on the front line of change and that cultural institutions exist to spur and support big societal movements. Through powerful art experiences, thoughtful and provocative content, and deep opportunities for participation, we are committed to kindling inclusive culture that cultivates empathy, awakens personal and societal transformation, and reaches for a world fueled by inspiration. The need has never been stronger than now, and there is no better place than YBCA to answer the call. We are so glad that you are here. We are grateful for your cultural participation, and we hope you will come back and enjoy all that YBCA has to offer.

Warmly,

DEBORAH CULLINAN
CEO of YERBA BUENA
CENTER FOR THE ARTS

THE LESLIE AND MERLE RABINE 2016–17 PERFORMANCE SEASON



OPPOSING FORCES

PERFORMERS AND CO-CHOREOGRAPHERS:

Alfredo “Free” Vergara Jr.
Brysen “Just Be” Angeles
Fever One
Michael O’Neal Jr.
MozesLateef
Robert Eyerman (replacing Brysen
Angeles for this performance)

Original music by:
Waylon Dungan aka WD4D

*Vocal performance on cover of Kendrick
Lamar’s “Backseat Freestyle”:*
Gifted Gab

Original voice-over for Lateef’s solo:
Kyana Saleem

Dramaturg:
Marc Bamuthi Joseph

Lighting design:
Amiya Brown

Floor and wall design:
Ben Zamora

AMY O’NEAL CONCEPT, DIRECTION, AND CO-CHOREOGRAPHER:

Costume design:
Wazhma Samizay + Danial Hellman with
Bobojan

Cinematic documentation:
Kyle Seago

Management:
Stefanie Karlin and SQUID MGMT

Thank you: On the Boards, Velocity Dance Center, The Beacon: Massive Monkees Studio, PICA, YBCA, Case Van Rij, Caroline Renard, Ben Zamora, Amiya Brown, Zoe Scofield, Tonya Lockyer, Mark Haim, Koushik Ghosh, Dani Tirell, Ellie Sandstrom, Shinobi Jaxx, Marc Bamuthi Joseph, Jess Van Nostrand and the Project Room, Kyle Seago, Wazhma Samizay, Stefanie Karlin and SQUID MGMT. Pre-show dance party people. Michaela and Kyana (Lateef’s daughters), who were part of our process. Free, Mike, Fever, Brysen, Lateef, Waylon, and Robert—my brothers from other mothers. My TX family, Mom, Dad, and Adam. And thank you to Eric Pranzarone, my rock.

A NOTE FROM THE CURATOR

MARC BAMUTHI JOSEPH
CHIEF OF PROGRAM AND PEDAGOGY



*Can't match this
Rapper slash actress
Lauryn more powerful
than two Cleopatras
Bomb graffiti /
on the tomb of Nefertiti
MC's ain't ready to take it
to the Serengetti
My rhymes is heavy/
like the mind of Sister Betty...
Now hear this mixture
Where hip hop
meets scripture
Develop the negative
Into a positive picture...*

In the end, he was man enough to earn her love, but not man enough to keep it. I could be referring to hip hop's relationship to Lauryn Hill, but, as my close friends know, that wouldn't be the full story. The longer story is seismic, like the passion

of young love before it knows it will fail, or like an old soul making blue light music for the dawn. In the longer story, the responsibility of earning and keeping love is gender fluid, playing indiscriminately across bodies like Ms. Hill's music did in 1998.

I remember getting *free*...

I remember being *fluid* in my body in '98. I was learning the Bay Area through farmers markets and folkloric dance classes. My body bounding against the air *was* the fullest expression against Clinton-era policing, my movement implicitly spoke the matter of my black life. I was fresh outta undergrad, recently up on Carter G Woodson, and thought I knew everything there was to know. Lauryn Hill's music was the soundtrack of my naivety and stamina, the crossroads of hip hop and hope...

Our third installment of the Clas/sick Hip Hop series engages artists with disruptive attitudes regarding gender in freedom culture. The Forum is a literal cauldron of opposing forces this evening. We begin with five men using the hyper masculine vocabulary of Breaking to expose the fear of feminine qualities in our culture. We continue the discussion with fifteen bands recovering and reimagining the work of arguably the greatest female coded artist in hip hop's history, Lauryn Hill. At the Forum's borders, and permeating through its walls, is the work of 30 YBCA Fellows who've created more than a dozen material responses to the question, "Can we design Freedom?"

Like Ms. Hill's seminal album, Amy O'Neal and UnderCover investigate classic human overtures that are somehow clouded in hip hop's context: love and reciprocity, absence and tender reclamation of the body, the rising voice of youth speaking truth to power.

Here in the after, outside of the fluidity of youth, power feels a little more scarce. For this evening however, I choose to remember when nothing even mattered, even when it hurt so bad. Tonight I choose to get lost in the music, to *use* the culture to get *free*...



Photo by Devi Pride

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

"O'Neal synthesizes complex themes with a cohesive, penetrating aesthetic. Her latest work transcends disciplines and boundaries. It is a bridge between worlds, a translator for opposing points of view, a force for good." —Leah Baltus, *City Arts magazine*

After spending time exploring her personal influences, societal programming, and ideas about feminism in her previous work, Amy O'Neal wanted to bring men into the conversation. She realized that most of the dancing men she knew in her life were B-boys and street dancers. After several months of initial conversations in 2013, *Opposing Forces* began rehearsing in spring 2014. *Opposing Forces* utilizes tropes of contemporary performance to expose fears around feminine qualities in our culture through the hyper-masculine dance style of breaking. With curiosity, vulnerability, and power, five world-class B-boys uncover binary perceptions of gender through recorded conversations and physical explorations, all set in a futuristic geometric landscape. *Opposing Forces* premiered at On the Boards in Seattle and toured to Off Center Festival, Costa Mesa, California; TBA Festival, Portland, Oregon; the University of Hawaii, Hilo; Maui Cultural Center, Kahului, Hawaii; Kahilu Theater, Waimea, Hawaii; and Spoletto Festival USA, Charleston, South Carolina.

To see a short documentary capturing the initial process and premiere of *Opposing Forces*, visit vimeo.com and search *Opposing Forces* Documentary. A long form documentary about the evolution and tour of *Opposing Forces* will be released in Fall of 2017.

ARTIST PROFILES

AMY O'NEAL is a dancer, performer, choreographer, and dance educator equally participating in street and club dance culture and contemporary dance and performance. She is passionate about the intersection of these worlds while honoring their complex cultural differences. A sought-after artist and teacher for the past seventeen years, O'Neal works nationally and internationally, choreographing for stage, commercials, rock shows, galleries, dance films, and music videos. Her work is an amalgam of her diverse movement and life experiences, presenting social commentary with dark humor and heavy beats. She has been based in Seattle for twenty years and will be splitting her time between Seattle and Los Angeles in the coming years.

O'Neal was awarded the first Distinguished Alumni Award from Cornish College of the Arts in 2014. Her work has been supported by Creative Capital, Foundation for Contemporary Arts, Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, the National Dance Project (both commissioning and tour-only support), and two National Performance Network commissioning awards. She is a DanceWEB scholar (ImPulsTanz Vienna), a two-time Artist Trust fellow, a two-time Seattle Stranger Genius Award nominee, and a Herb Alpert Award nominee.

O'Neal is a longtime collaborator of the musician-comedian Reggie Watts, worked with Savion Glover and Daniel Bernard Roumain, and danced in the Pat Graney Company in her formative years. From 2000 to 2010 she was the co-director of locust (music/dance/video) with the musician-composer Zeke Keeble, creating six evening-length works and several shorter works. She was also the lead singer for Keeble's former band, Marrow. She taught at Velocity Dance Center in Seattle for fifteen years and currently co-teaches and hosts House open classes and sessions at the Beacon: Massive Monkees Studio in Seattle with Dani Tirrell. In recent years she was an invited dancer for *Clas/Sick Hip Hop* in

2014 at YBCA, a guest panelist for 2016 Zulu Nation's Meeting of the Minds, and twice invited to battle in *Queen of the Hill: All Ladies/All Styles* battle in Seattle. Her dance writing has been published in *Dance Magazine*, *Art Dish Forum*, *Blog the Boards*, and *City Arts* magazine. She spent half of 2015 in the Bay Area working as a guest artist in residence at Mills College; serving as choreographic architect for *Citizen Dance*, a large-scale dance event with a corresponding mobile app at UC Berkeley; and setting a duet on RAWdance for their show *Double Exposure*. She spent the fall of 2016 in Los Angeles teaching at Ryan Heffington's studio, the Sweat Spot. *Opposing Forces* is her eighth evening-length work, and she is eternally grateful to her collaborators for making this happen with her. amyoneal.com

A founding member of Circle of Fire, **ALFREDO VERGARA JR.**, aka "**FREE**," has more than fifteen years of experience deeply rooted in breaking. He has participated in dance events and competitions locally and internationally, including the world-famous breakdancing events *Freestyle Sessions* (USA), *Dance Delight* (Japan), *Red Bull Lords of the Floor* (USA), *Juste Debout* (France), and the *International Battle of the Year* (Germany). Vergara starred in a solo DVD, *A Beautiful One Man Show*, and his experience in breaking and other dance styles such as hip hop, house dancing, freestyle, and the Brazilian martial arts/dance capoeira has led him to take part in judging competitions and discussion panels. He teaches workshops all over the world.

BRYSEN "JUST BE" ANGELES, a founding member of the Massive Monkees crew, started B-boying in 1994. Drawing early influence from legendary 1990s Seattle crews such as DVS, BOSS Crew, and Rock Steady Crew, Brysen and fellow crew members from Untouchable Style Monkees would go on to partner with M.A.S.S.I.V.E. crew to form Massive Monkees in 1999. Both on and off the dance floor, Angeles plays a key leadership role in Massive Monkees. Some of his accomplishments

include winning the 2004 B-boy World Championships in London, innovating new dynamic choreography as a member of the Seattle Sonics "Boom Squad," performing for millions on MTV's hit show *America's Best Dance Crew*, and launching Massive Monkees' own studio, the Beacon, where hundreds of students in Seattle come to grow artistically. Brysen was an original cast member and co-choreographer for *Opposing Forces* and is currently touring with Macklemore and Ryan Lewis.

FEVER ONE is a B-boy and DJ originally from Seattle who relocated to New York in 1997 and eventually joined the world-famous Rock Steady Crew. He is best known for the "gunzblazin'" style he developed while studying with his mentors Icey Ice and Lil' Lep of the New York City Breakers. Inspired by a poppin' battle in Seattle's Central District and the aggression he saw in breakin', Fever One had become influenced by the spirituality and competitiveness of dancing by the age of ten. Since then, he has performed

in many prestigious venues, from Lincoln Center to Madison Square Garden, *Fashion Week* to *Dancing with the Stars*. He has lectured on the history of hip-hop at Yale, Princeton, Rutgers, and the University of Washington.

MICHAEL O'NEAL JR. started dancing in high school in Tacoma, Washington, as a self-taught hip hop-influenced dancer. He then received formal training in ballet and modern at the University of Washington. O'Neal loves to teach others and see their growth, as well as grow with his students. Through his art he hopes to inspire others to follow their dreams and continue to grow in everyday life. One of his biggest goals in dance is to bridge the gap between the ballet and modern world and the hip hop world, and build a stronger dance community in his own city and afar. He is part of both the Chapter1NE and Beat Hippies dance crews as well as Seattle's AU Collective. You can find him under the moniker Choreomike on YouTube and other social media.



Photo by Nate Watters

MOZESLATEEF is an artist who rhymes, dances, draws, acts, models, and films. Lateef is an active member of Circle of Fire Crew, which strives to build community by using the crew's skills to maintain the B-boy/dance/artist culture and express positivity and creativity in the process. Lateef and Circle of Fire Crew have performed and competed internationally at the *Korea Hip Hop Festival*, *Battle of the Year* (Germany), *Dance Delight* (Japan), and *Juste Debout* (France). In Seattle Lateef has performed with Circle of Fire at the Seattle Center EMP opening and the Paramount Theater, and with Soul Shifters at the Moore Theater. He has taught workshops and breakdance classes to special-needs youth at Camp Long, and to students at Spectrum Dance Studio, Gage Academy of Arts, and the Beacon: Massive Monkeys Studio. He has collaborated with the band Global Heat, and won Hard Rock Café's Rock Band competition. Recently, Lateef represented Circle of Fire in the film *Tribelution*, which explores the evolution of hip hop. He is currently working on another album with his rap group Dirty Scientifix, and working on Circle of Fire's twentieth-anniversary event.

Based in Seattle, **ROBERT EYERMAN**, aka **B-BOY BOBBY DRAKE**, started breaking in 2005 at the age of thirteen. Three years later he founded the Dog Pound Crew. His group frequently works alongside the Seattle Theater Group, dancing in productions such as *DANCE This*, *Global Party*, and the *Sasquatch Music Festival*. Eyerman holds degrees in chemistry and biochemistry from the University of Washington. His passions include dance, music, medicine, education, and philanthropy. When he is not conducting clinical research in the hepatology clinic at a local Seattle hospital, he provides in-home tutoring to youth, writes music, trains for competitions, and brainstorms how to further impact the world through art and science. Eyerman enjoys jamming on his guitar, playing with lasers, and traveling the world with his girlfriend.

WAYLON DUNGAN aka **WD4D** blasts the hinges off genre definitions with his inventive and eclectic style. A knowledgeable producer and engaging performer, WD4D was named champion of Seattle's *2010 Battle of the Mega-Mixes*. When he is not pushing forward his unique beat-flipping sound, WD4D is supporting the musical community and promoting other artists who blend futuristic hip hop with electronic possibilities. He is also a resident at the weekly Future Beat/B Boy party *Stop Biting*, a forward-thinking night of music in Seattle. He has shared stages with Machinedrum, Lunice, Daedelus, Sweatson Klank, B. Bravo, Onra, and many more.

AMIYA BROWN is a lighting designer and visual artist based in Seattle. She holds a master's degree in theatrical lighting design from the University of Washington. Designing nationally and internationally for theater, dance, and opera, she specializes in generative performance works. Her work has been presented at the Baryshnikov Performing Arts Center; New York; the Joyce Theater, New York; the Kasser Theater, Montclair, New Jersey; On the Boards, Seattle; the Moore, Seattle; REDCAT, Los Angeles; ODC, San Francisco; the Guthrie Theatre, Minneapolis; the Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, Wisconsin; Maui Center for the Arts; Miami Light Project, Florida; Della Nuova Danza Roma; Le Quai, Angers, France, and many others. She received a Gypsy Rose Lee Award in 2012 for her work on *The Skriker* (Janet Findley Production) and recently designed lights for the Bessie Award-winning production *Girl Gods*. Long-standing collaborators include Pat Graney, Amy O'Neal, zoe | juniper, Alice Gosti, Kyle Loven, Kate Wallich, and Washington Ensemble Theatre. amiyabrowndesign.com

BEN ZAMORA is an American artist whose work is primarily light based. He has created large-scale installations and sculptures for the Park Avenue Armory, New York; Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival; Art Basel/Design Miami; Kunsthalle Krems, Austria; the



Photos by Gabriel Bienczycki



Photo by Gabriel Bienczycki

Frye Art Museum, Seattle; and Suyama Space, Seattle, as well as a number of other galleries, museums, private art collections, and public art projects. Zamora's work moves seamlessly between performance and visual art; he creates light-based sculptures and art installations for performance-based work, including projects with Kronos Quartet; the Berlin Philharmonic; the Barbican, London; Deutsche Oper Berlin; the Los Angeles Philharmonic; and the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles. His artistic collaborators have included Bill Viola, Gronk, Peter Sellars, Steve Reich, and Beryl Korot; the renowned architecture firm Olson Kundig Architects; and Saint Genet. He was resident lighting designer for Amy O'Neal and Zeke Keeble's performance *brainchild, locust music/ dance/video*, from 2005 to 2010. *Opposing Forces* is his first collaboration with O'Neal where lighting is not his main role. His geometric landscape for *Opposing Forces* had light in mind, but Amiya Brown designed the response.

www.benzamora.com

BOBOJAN was co-created by Danial Hellman and Wazhma Samizay. The principle of the line is clothing that makes you feel beautiful. Each piece has been tested on hundreds of bodies to ensure that it feels like it was made for you. We take pride in our line being made in Seattle with sustainability in mind. The clothing line was inspired by Samizay's grandmother and her four daughters, each one having a distinct personality, features, and body type.

The son of an acclaimed deaf actor, Seattle native **KYLE SEAGO** was earning awards at international film festivals while he was still in high school. After helping cofound the National Film Festival for Talented Youth (now the largest youth film festival in the world), he began working as a TV producer on shows such as CW's *America's Next Top Model* and MTV's *The Phone*. Seago has produced more than thirty hours of prime-time television and traveled to more than fifteen countries for international shoots. After moving his home base back to Seattle, he worked as a commercial

producer (Microsoft, Volvo, McDonalds, Harley Davidson) and opened up a documentary film production studio, Seago Media. He currently splits his time between documenting international tours and shows for musicians and directing short- and long-form documentary film projects. His projects include a documentary based in Zimbabwe, a six-part television documentary series based in Alaska, and several art- and artist-based films. His work focuses on human-interest stories, often related to the arts and the creative process. Seago worked with Amy O'Neal to create a short documentary about the initial process and premiere of *Opposing Forces*. He is working on a longer-form documentary about the evolution and tour of the show to highlight how the work, and those involved, have changed over time.

STEFANIE KARLIN is the founder and lead producer at SQUID MGMT, working as an independent producer to leading West Coast performance and dance artists. Since SQUID MGMT's inception in January 2014, Karlin has led the charge with a constant interest in building allied partnerships and community involvement. She was managing director of zoe | juniper from July 2012 to November 2016 and was instrumental in the formation of zoe | juniper's development committee and board of directors, the organization's incorporation as a 501(c)3, and the company's ongoing organizational success. She had the honor of working at Seattle's Velocity Dance Center, serving as producing director (2011-14) and business manager (2014-16), assisting Tonya Lockyer and the rest of the team in the revitalization of the Northwest's leading contemporary dance center. She has also worked for several other arts organizations in Seattle and Chicago, including the Seattle International Film Festival, Chicago Public Radio, Northwest Dance Network, and the Moving Architects.

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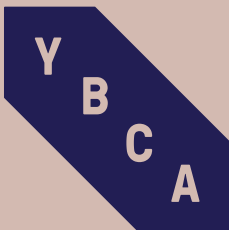


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